

From the Army Acquisition Executive Army Transformation and Modularity



In January 2005, I traveled to Fort Stewart, GA, for an event honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. During my visit, I met with 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) Commanding General MG William G. Webster, and later with several Soldiers — now combat veterans in the global war on terrorism — who stormed through Iraq and into Baghdad to end Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003. These courageous men and women were preparing to re-deploy within a few days of our meeting, and I was very impressed by their dedication, commitment to service and ingenuity. They knew that the mission was not complete when they left Iraq the first time, and they were ready to head back.

I was captivated by their stories. I heard firsthand, candid accounts of the equipment they used in *Operation Iraqi Freedom* — what worked and what they really liked. Body armor and armored vehicles, the Rapid Fielding Initiative and the Rapid Equipping Force all contributed to their success. They told me of the great value of Blue Force Tracking (BFT), also known as Force XXI Battle Command, Brigade and Below System. With this system — a dashboard-mounted, ruggedized computer with touch screen display on combat vehicles and aircraft with a roof-mounted transceiver that beams information via satellite to headquarters and other like-configured vehicles — the 3ID could engage enemy forces during fierce sandstorms, communicate with leaders and one another, distinguish between friend and foe, and allow logistics and supply forces to maintain a constant stream of materiel to troops.

Using lessons learned in Iraq, the Army and industry are working to improve BFT, adding bandwidth to transmit more data on friendly and enemy units and allowing expanded text messaging. A BFT hand-held version that will allow dismounted ground forces to maintain situational awareness is in development.

Now back in Iraq, the 3ID is the first division to reorganize under the Army's new modularity concept. The division has been expanded to include a fourth brigade, transforming into a "modular division." Each brigade is now a self-sustaining brigade combat team that can operate outside the full division. Over the next year, the Army will learn how to improve on its plans to move from a division- to a brigade-based force built, in part, on the 3ID's experiences.

In preparation for my visit, I learned more about the 3ID's illustrious history and the U.S. presidents who have lauded the men and women at Fort Stewart. When President John F. Kennedy visited there in 1962 and spoke to the troops on Donovan Field, he said, "Regardless of how persistent our diplomacy may be in activities stretching all around the globe, in the final analysis, it rests upon the power of the United States, and that power rests upon the will and courage of our citizens, and upon you in this field."

President George W. Bush echoed those words in September 2003 when he came to salute the Army's 3ID for ousting Saddam Hussein's regime in record time. The president said, "You made history. You've made our Nation proud. And you have earned the Presidential Unit Citation." This citation is awarded to units of the Armed Forces for extraordinary heroism in action against an armed enemy on or after Dec. 7, 1941. The unit must display such gallantry, determination and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions as to set it apart and above other units participating in the same campaign. This, the highest of recognition, was well deserved.

It was clear to me that the 3ID is well trained, well led and well equipped. With their high morale and dedication to duty, I expect they will again do an outstanding job on this tour. Hooah!

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